

Let Those Who Oppose The Prophet's Sunnah Beware

Some Poignant Lessons from Surah Al-Noor, Ayâh 63



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Contents

Introduction to book	3
Introduction to ayâh 63	5
Some Poignant Lessons:	
Disbelief	9
Innovation	12
Trials and Tribulation	15
Afflictions	16
Earthquakes	18
Killing and Bloodshed	19
Tyrannical over-rule	20
Opposing the Sunnah Means Opposing the Qur'ân	22
A Word on Following and Obeying	32
Appendix 1	34
Appendix 2	35
Appendix 3	39
Appendix 4	40
Appendix 5	42

Disclaimer: The English translation of the meanings of the Qur'ân is taken from 'The Noble Qur'ân' by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise is due to Allâh. We praise Him and seek His aid and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allâh from the evil of our own selves and from the evil of our actions. Whomsoever Allâh guides, none can send astray and whoever Allâh sends astray, none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh alone, who has no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is His slave and His Messenger. May Allâh send peace and blessings upon him, his family and his Companions until the Last Day.



It is fundamental to a Muslim's salvation to associate with the Qur'ân; to read it regularly and to understand it and to put it into practise as much as he can. It is also necessary for the able Muslim, to teach it to others. To understand the Qur'ân correctly, it is an absolute necessity to associate ourselves with the Sunnah of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), to read authentic hadeeth and to understand them and to put them into practise as much as we can and exhort others to do the same.

Primary consideration must also be given to the Seerah (biography of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) as only through a wholly comprehensive grasp of the established sources of Islâm, can Muslims conclude on matters relating to their faith (e.g. belief and worship and other actions etc.)

This small book intends to discuss and analyse some explanations of ayâh (verse) 63 of Surah al-Noor. It is a step in understanding its message, deriving some benefits from it and making it a means for Muslims to correct their affairs and put the guidance of Allâh into action and implement it in our daily lives.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says in the Noble Qur'ân: **Say (O Muhammad to mankind), if you (truly) love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allâh is Al-Ghafoor (the All-Forgiving), Ar-Raheem (the All-Mericiful). Say, Obey Allâh and His Messenger. But if they turn away then Allâh does not love the disbelievers.** (Aal 'Imrân: 31-32)

Muslims are commanded to obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and in numerous places in the Qur'ân, we will see how Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) has made obedience to the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) a distinct duty and obligation. From the message contained in the ayât, we will show how opposition to the Sunnah is equal to opposition to the Qur'ân and Him (سبحانه و تعالى) who sent it and indeed every aspect of Islâm!

Before carefully looking into the subject matter of the book, let us begin with an understanding of what the Sunnah of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) really means in all aspects of the word. The definition of Sunnah differs depending on the area of Shari'ah one looks at. For example, in the area of usool (fundamental

principles), a scholar of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) will define Sunnah as legal evidence and proof pertaining to matters that are being sought. In the area of hadeeth, a muhaddith (scholar of hadeeth) will define Sunnah as everything the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said, did, or permitted to do. Along with this, he will deliberate on the veracity of the report and assess its authenticity. In ahkam (Islamic rulings or commands), Sunnah has five levels of order, namely: Wajib (compulsory); Mustahabb (recommended); Mubah (neither obligated nor recommended); Makruh (highly disliked and abstaining is recommended); Haraam (prohibited and therefore abstaining is obligatory).

It is generally accepted and concluded that that Sunnah in respect to the Deen of Islam refers to the Messenger's (ﷺ) traditions, manners and actions, including specific words spoken as well as tacit approval or disapproval given to an act.

Once we understand this, it is easy to see how Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) links the Sunnah to salvation and ultimate success for a Muslim. Indeed Allâh's forgiveness is the real success for a Muslim through which salvation is achieved and Paradise rewarded. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says in the Qur'ân: **And We have sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinns and all that exists).** (Al Anbiya': 107)

This mercy indeed is one of the greatest blessings for mankind and also a means of forgiveness from Allâh for those who follow the Prophet (ﷺ) and heed His (سبحانه و تعالى) guidance. Ibn Katheer explains that whoever rejects it (i.e. the mercy) and denies it, will lose out in this world and in the Hereafter. He (سبحانه و تعالى) also says: **Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He is anxious over you, for the believers (he is) full of pity, kind and merciful.** (At-Tawbah: 128)

In this verse, Allâh has bestowed a great Blessing and Mercy upon mankind, in particular, the Arabs, because He sent to them a Messenger from amongst themselves who spoke their language, whose lineage, nobility and trustworthiness were well-known to them; and Allâh has described him as possessing certain Divinely-given qualities which make it incumbent upon all of us to follow him and believe in him, for he is troubled and grieved by whatever troubles and grieves his 'Ummah (nation/people), and he ardently seeks that which is beneficial to them and earnestly desires that they be guided aright and he is full of compassion for them.

Those who are removed from Allâh's Mercy are indeed from the losers who will be full of regret. This regret will indeed be even more painful for those did not obey nor follow the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ): **And (remember) the Day when the wrong-doer will bite at his hands, he will say: "Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger.** (Al Furqân: 27)

This regret will continue during the punishment: **On the Day when their faces will be turned over in the Fire, they will say: "Oh, would that we had obeyed Allâh and obeyed the Messenger (Muhammad).** (Al Ahzâb: 66)

On the other hand, the one who adhered to the Sunnah will attain the ultimate benefit: **...and whosoever obeys Allâh and His Messenger (Muhammad) will be admitted to Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise), to abide therein, and that will be the great success.** (An Nisâ': 13)

Let us read what the first part of ayâh 63 from Surah al-Noor states: **“Make not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling of one another. Allâh knows those of you who slip away under shelter (of some excuse without taking the permission to leave) from the Messenger.”**

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) reminds the Muslims that the position and status of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is not like that of any other person. By virtue of Prophethood and final Messengership, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is infallible and the pinnacle of human perfection. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Those Messengers! We preferred some to others; to some of them Allâh spoke (directly); others He raised to degrees (of honour).** (Al Baqarah: 253)

And Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the best of them. This is indicated by many facts; some of which are: He was the Imâm of the Prophets on the night of the Mi'râj, because no one is put forward except the best. More evidence that he is the best of them comes from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما), who said: “The Messenger of Allâh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ‘I will be the leader of the sons of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and the first one for whom the grave will be opened, and the first to intercede, and the first whose intercession will be accepted.’” [Saheeh Muslim, 4223]

The characteristics of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and what he was sent with confirm that he is superior to the rest of the Prophets and Messengers. Allâh has singled out the Qur’ân, to the exclusion of other Books, to be preserved (Qur’ân 15:9). In the case of the other Books, Allâh entrusted their protection to the people (Qur’ân 5:44). He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers (Qur’ân 33:40) and was unique in that he was sent to all of mankind (Qur’ân 25:1) and not just for a particular people or a region. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) will be the owner of the “Position of praise and glory” (Maqâm al Mahmood) on the Day of Resurrection (Qur’ân 17:78). Regarding this, at-Tabari said: “Most of the commentators said that this is the position which he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) will occupy in order to intercede for the people on the Day of Resurrection, to ask that their Lord might grant them respite from the great hardship that they are suffering on that Day.” [Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 5/103]

And he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) will be the leader of all mankind on the Day of Resurrection, as stated in the hadeeth quoted above. He will be the first to cross the bridge (As-Sirât) with his ‘Ummah as al-Bukhâri narrated via a lengthy hadeeth from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما), in which it states: “... and I will be the first one among the Messengers to lead his ‘Ummah across it.” [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 764]

Another indication that he is the best of the Prophets is the fact that all other Prophets cannot and will not be able to intercede; some of them will refer the people to another Prophet until ‘Eesa (Jesus) refers them to Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) will step forward to intercede for everyone, and the first and the last will praise him for that (the Prophets and the rest of mankind).

His (صلى الله عليه وسلم) unique characteristics, as mentioned in the ayât of the Qur’ân and authentic narrations are too many to mention here. Entire works have been written on this topic; see for example, Kitab Khasâ’is al-Mustafa (صلى الله عليه وسلم) Baynal-Ghulw wa’l-Jafaa’ by al-Sâdiq ibn Muhammad, p.33-79.

Returning to the meaning of ayâh 63, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) tells us that those who slip away from the company of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) without his permission should know that Allâh is well aware of their behaviour and intention. This type of behaviour does not befit a Muslim and can become a prelude to hypocrisy or a rejection of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and Islâm altogether.

Muslims are commanded to obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and in numerous places in the Qur'ân, we will see how Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) has made obedience to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) a distinct duty and obligation. Of the main message contained in this ayâh, it will be seen how opposition to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) means opposition to the Sunnah; and how this opposition also equates to opposing the Qur'ân and indeed every aspect of Islâm!

The second part of ayâh 63 makes this link, and this is the part of the ayâh we will be discussing in detail: **And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment (i.e. his Sunnah) beware, lest some Fitnah befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.**

Here Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) is warning of severe negative consequences for Muslims unless they fully embrace and obey the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Those who claim adherence to the Deen of Islâm and love of the Messenger by mere lip service should understand that words are meaningless without firm belief and practical application of this love. Belief without action is of no use, nor is action without belief of any value as both must go together and remain together. The injunction to confirm belief with action has dual wisdom: The first is that belief leads to good actions. The person who does not believe does not have faith in accountability of actions, or the Hereafter and may lack the moral imperative for righteous action. The second is that belief itself is nurtured by, and blooms with the performance of good deeds. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And those who and do righteous good deeds, they are dwellers of Paradise, they will dwell therein forever.** (Al Baqarah: 82)

Of ayâh 63, Ibn Katheer writes in his highly acclaimed tafseer of the Qur'ân that: "And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment..." means going against the commandment of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), which is his way, methodology and Sunnah. All words and deeds will be measured against his words and deeds; those that are in accordance with his words and deeds will be accepted, and whatever does not match up will be rejected, no matter who the person is who said and did them."

This meaning is indeed monumental because it contains points that form the basis of one's faith and a scale for measuring one's actions. Every word that is uttered and every action that is put into practise will either be accepted or rejected based on the criteria of whether they are in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Everything which the Messenger said or did in Islâm was revealed to him as he was guided by Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى). It is partly for this reason that Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired.** (An Najm: 3-4)

Imâm Ahmad said regarding this ayâh: "Do you know what the trial mentioned here is? The trial is shirk - perhaps when someone opposes the Prophet's saying, some deviation may affect his heart such that he will be destroyed."

No Muslim can contemplate opposing Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى), so how can it be that they oppose the one whom He sent? He, the Most High says: **He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad) has indeed obeyed Allâh** (An Nisâ': 80)

He (سبحانه و تعالى) also says: **O you who believe! Obey Allâh, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad) and render not vain your deeds.** (Muhammad: 33)

These are amongst two of the most explicit ayât of the Qur'ân where Allâh equates obedience to His Messenger to that of Himself (سبحانه و تعالى). Furthermore, **"...and render not vain your deeds"** is another clear warning to Muslim who do not obey Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that their deeds will be annulled. This means that every word that is uttered and every action that is put into practise will either be accepted or rejected based on the criteria whether they are sanctioned by and are in accordance with the Qur'ân and Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This implication is further elaborated by: **And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear Allâh. Verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.** (Al Hashr: 7)

The aspect of taking and abstaining is intricate to complete obedience to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The companions, about whom the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "The best of the people is my generation, then those who followed them, then those who followed them." [Saheeh al Bukhâri and Muslim] – were the first to obey Allâh's commands (see al Qur'ân- 9:100, 17:36, 7:33).

Our righteous predecessors (salaf) from the Sahâbah to those who followed them were the most complete in faith, the most upright in action, the most superior in intellect, the most firm in resolve and the most correctly guided on the sirât al-mustaqeem (straight path). It is through them that Islâm was preserved and passed down through the generations. This preservation was not only of the Qur'ân, but also of the Sunnah which was memorised, practised and taught and written down until it was formalised in to Hadeeth.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muhammad) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way. We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - what an evil destination.** (An Nisâ': 115)

We know from this ayâh that "the believers' way" is the right path as Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) states. The believers spoken of in this ayâh are the Sahâbah (Companions) of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم); this is because they were the closest to him and drank directly from the fountain of Prophethood in the understood and applied Islam in the way it was meant to be understood and practised.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (reminder) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption).** (Al Hijr: 9)

The word 'dhikr' in this ayâh is explained to refer to the Qur'ân and many of the mufasiroon (Qur'ânic exegetes) have explained word to also refer to the Sunnah or the Hadeeth. This is because they too are a reminder and remembrance. Therefore, not only did Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) promise to protect the Qur'ân, He also promised to protect the ways and the narrations of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that in essence specify and explain the Qur'ân in many parts. And how can they not be preserved when Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) has made the Sunnah a pivotal obligation to be followed? Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **It is not for a believer, man**

or woman, when Allâh and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error. (Al Ahzâb: 36)

Say (O Muhammad): “Obey Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad).” But if they turn away, then Allâh does not like the disbelievers. (Aal ‘Imrân: 32)

And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muhammad) after the right path has been shown clearly to him and follows other than the believers' way. We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - what an evil destination! (An Nisâ': 115)

In this ayâh, opposition to the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has again been linked to Hellfire. Shaykhul Islâm Ibn Taymiyyah commented on this verse, saying: "All who contradict and oppose the Messenger after the right path has been clearly shown to them, have followed other than the Path of the Believers; and all who follow other than the Path of the Believers have contradicted and opposed the Messenger after the right Path has been shown to them. If one thinks that he is following the Path of the Faithful Believers and is mistaken, he is in the same position as one who thinks he is following the Messenger and is mistaken."

The cause of effect remains the same throughout the Qur'ân; those who disobey Allâh and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) have no salvation and are condemned by the Almighty. During the course of this book, the fundamental matter of following and obeying the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) will be discussed.

Returning to the subject matter in ayâh 63 of surah al-Noor: **And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment (i.e. his Sunnah) beware, lest some Fitnah befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.**

Ibn Katheer further explains that "lest some Fitnah befall them" means disbelief or hypocrisy or innovation that may enter their hearts. He further explains "a painful torment be inflicted on them" to mean afflicting them with capital punishment or by law of prescribed punishment or by confinement in prison, or so on.

Al-Azhari said: "The Arabic word fitnah includes meanings of testing and trial..." Ibn Fâris said: "Fa-ta-na is a sound root which indicates testing or trial." Ibn al-Atheer said: "Fitnah: trial or test... The word is often used to describe tests in which something disliked is eliminated. Later it was also often used in the sense of sin, kufr (disbelief), fighting, burning, removing and diverting." Ibn al-A'râbi summed up the meanings of fitnah when he said: "Fitnah means testing, fitnah means trial, fitnah means wealth, fitnah means children, fitnah means kufr, fitnah means differences of opinion among people, fitnah means burning with fire." It must also be noted that Fitnah also has great wisdom behind the calamities and turmoil that it brings with the permission of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالی) (see appendix 2).

Fitnah also refers to the 'smelting of gold ingots and removing the impurities from it' - i.e. separating the good from the bad. This is what happens during a fitnah where the good is separated from the bad, weak from the strong. In this sense, it refers to a test, or an event, or a crisis or a calamity that reveals as to who succeeds and who does not.

The commentators of the Qur'ân have generally accepted that the 'fitnah' and 'a painful torment' mentioned in the ayâh 63 above refer to a number of consequences, amongst them they include:

Disbelief:

Among the greatest of fitan (singl.) facing the Ummah is that of Irtitad or apostasy. Many who were born Muslim are turning away from faith, knowingly or unknowingly. This is fitnah was prophesied by the Messenger (ﷺ) when he said: "Hasten to do good deeds before fitnah come like pieces of a dark night (which spreads all over), when a man will be a believer in the morning and a kafir (disbeliever) by the evening, or he will be a believer in the evening and a kafir by the morning; selling his religious commitment (Deen) for worldly gain." [Saheeh Muslim]

Disbelief occurs in belief, word and action. These days, the instance of people uttering outright statements of kufr is increasing alarmingly, and many do not even realise the grave implications of this. Those who reject the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) have committed major disbelief that takes them out of the fold of Islâm. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says about the hypocrites: **If you ask them, they declare: We were only talking idly and joking.** Say: "Was it at Allâh and His Ayât and His Messenger that you were mocking? (Al Tawbah: 65) Ayât here refers to the Qur'ân and the Sunnah and the proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs that are contained in the revelations. After this, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after you had believed.**

Denying or mocking a part of the Qur'ân or Sunnah amounts to apostasy if it is with knowledge and not with dubiety. Furthermore, once this disbelief occurs, there remains nothing to hold back a person from committing or justifying further atrocities. For example, the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Do not revert to disbelief after me, by striking the necks of one another (i.e. killing each other)." [Saheeh Bukhâri, 1/122]

It can be adduced from the statement *"Do not revert to disbelief after me..."* that reversion to disbelief can only happen once a Muslim rejects or leaves the teachings of the Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "My 'Ummah will divide into 73 sects, and all of them will be in the Hellfire save one. The people asked him: "And which one will that be? He replied: "The one that follows what I and my Companions are upon right now." [This hadeeth has been narrated in various wordings by Abu Da'wud, Tirmidhi, Ahmad and al-Hâkim]

One of the earliest sects that emerged in Muslim history, called the Khawarij did exactly what the Prophet (ﷺ) warned against. They left Islâm by abandoning the Sunnah and embracing innovated ideas and principles. This led them to rebel against the main Muslim body (the jama'ah) and led them to fight and kill Muslims. Amongst others, they chose to abandon the context and the implication of the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ): "Abusing a Muslim is Fusuq (i.e. an evil-doing), and killing him is Kufr (disbelief)." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 8/70]

After the demise of the Prophet (ﷺ), Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنهما) said: "In fact, it was hypocrisy that existed in the lifetime of the Prophet but today it is Kufr (disbelief) after belief." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 9/230]

These words coming from a major Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) are startling when we consider what the situation has become today, 1,420 years later! The disbelief Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنهما) speaks of was without a doubt due to the abandonment of the Sunnah after his (ﷺ) demise. This led some (like the Khawarij) to kufr after they had believed - Had they strictly guarded their religious affairs and adhered to the Sunnah, they would not have deviated from Islâm.

Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنهما) narrated regarding the Statement of Allâh: "Those who have changed Allâh's Blessings for disbelief..." (14.28) -: The people meant here by Allâh, are the disbelievers of Quraysh and Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is Allâh's Blessing..." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 5/315]

Indeed this hadeeth clearly explains that those who have changed Allâh's Blessings for disbelief have in fact done so by disbelieving and rejecting the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). There is no difference between opposing the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) himself or opposing his Sunnah, the consequences of punishment are the same. Opposing the clear authority which Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) has bestowed upon the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) constitutes denial which is punishable by the aforementioned calamities; the severest of which is admitting them into the fire of hell. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muhammad) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way. We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - what an evil destination.** (An Nisâ': 115)

Naturally, faith can only develop strong roots and a solid growth when we willingly remove all opposition to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Sunnah. Until he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) becomes more dear to us than our own parents and children and the whole of mankind, as he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his sons, his father and all of mankind." [Saheeh al Bukhâri and Muslim]

Amongst the qualities mentioned to achieve 'sweetness of faith', the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "The one to whom Allâh and His Apostle becomes dearer than anything else." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 1/15] – We must never forget that the second part of the Shahadah (testimony of faith): "Muhammadur Rasoolullah" (Muhammad is the Messenger of Allâh) necessitates Muslims obey him (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in all that he brought; to love him and accept his judgment as Allâh's sanctioned law-giver. Rejecting any part of his authority is clear disbelief and it is indeed a fitnah for them in this life and a painful torment awaits them in the hereafter for their apostasy.

Complete obedience to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) equates to belief; and a Muslim would rather accept being thrown in the fire than to revert to disbelief after Allâh has brought him out of it. No one would ever contemplate exchanging faith for disbelief except those who nurture seeds of hypocrisy. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Or do you want to ask your Messenger (Muhammad) as Mûsa (Moses) was asked before (i.e. show us openly our Lord?) And he who changes Faith for disbelief, verily, he has gone astray from the right way.** (Al Baqarah: 108)

It was indeed excessive questioning of the children of Israel (Bani Isra'eel) that led some of them astray. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) is giving a similar warning to the Muslim community that excessive and unnecessary questioning of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is a path that leads to disbelief because it is a subtle sign of contempt for the truth. As for the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "Leave me with what I have left for you, for those who were before you (i.e. Bani Isra'eel) were destroyed because of their excessive questioning, and their opposition to their Prophets. So when I command you to do anything, do it as much as it lies in your power and when I forbid you to do anything, then abandon it." [Saheeh Muslim, 7/3095]

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) further reminds us: **Verily, those who purchase disbelief at the price of Faith, not the least harm will they do to Allâh. For them, there is a painful torment.** (Al 'Imrân: 177)

How is disbelief purchased? Is it the lure of materialism and worldly gains and greed that transcends race and religion? For Muslim, disbelief can primarily be purchased at the price of rejecting Islâm and the teachings of the Messenger (ﷺ) in specific. This act of purchasing disbelief at the price of belief is applicable to all mankind and especially the hypocrites, as Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Verily, those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe (again), and (again) disbelieve, and go on increasing in disbelief; Allâh will not forgive them, nor guide them on the (Right) Way.** (An-Nisâ': 137)

Embracing and acting upon the Sunnah epitomises belief, rejecting any aspect of it reflects disbelief. The fitnah of opposing the Messenger (ﷺ) will result in Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) not forgiving this kufr nor guiding the person who does it. Without the forgiveness of the Most Merciful, can there be any hope of salvation? Indeed rejecting the authentic Sunnah or belittling it, or even questioning its applicability etc. are forms of disbelief that lead a person to reject faith; in some cases, Muslims do not even realise the severity of their words or actions until its entrenched in their hearts and souls, or they begin to justify their acts.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) has informed the Messenger (ﷺ): **O Messenger! Let not those who hurry to fall into disbelief grieve you, of such who say: "We believe" with their mouths but their hearts have no faith...** (Al-Mâ'idah: 41)

Can a Muslim race to disbelief with anything other than opposing the Messenger (ﷺ)? Allâh has further described the hypocrites in this ayâh; those who pay mere lip service to faith and who claim the love of the Messenger (ﷺ) and yet their hearts have no faith and their actions speak to the contrary. Many a times, we will hear Muslims who over-exaggerate their love for the Messenger (ﷺ) and indeed some even attribute divine attributes to the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ), yet even within this major kufr, they commit another kufr; that of non-compliance to the Sunnah. Had they known the Sunnah and accepted it and practised it, they would have understood for example, how the Messenger (ﷺ) strove hard to protect the tawheed of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى). It is indeed strange and bewildering that a Muslim can claim such a level of love for the Prophet (ﷺ), yet there is not a single sign of faith on him or within him; the Sunnah remains alien to him.

There are many ahadeeth from the Prophet (ﷺ) which state the obligation to follow the Qur'ân and his Sunnah; for example, an explicit hadeeth in which he (ﷺ) said: "I do not want to find any one of you reclining on his pillow, and when he hears of something that I have commanded or forbidden, he says, 'Between us and you there stands this Qur'ân, whatever we find is permissible in it we will take as permissible, and whatever we find is forbidden in it we will take as forbidden.' For I have been given the Book and something like it with it; it is like the Qur'ân or more." [This hadeeth is narrated in the books of Sunan and Musnad through many chains of transmission]

After quoting ayât that enjoin following the Messenger (ﷺ), Shaykhul Islâm ibn Taymiyyah said: "These texts enjoin following the Messenger even if we do not find what he said specifically referred to in the texts of the Qur'ân. These verses also enjoin following the Qur'ân even if we do not find what is said in the Qur'ân specifically mentioned in the hadeeth of the Messenger. So we must follow the Qur'ân and we must follow the Messenger. Following the one implies following the other, for the Messenger conveyed the Book, and the Book commands us to follow the Messenger."

The Messenger (ﷺ) said about his names: "I have several names: I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad, and I am Al-Mahi with whom Allâh obliterates Kufr (disbelief)..." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 6/419] - Indeed his name Al Mahi is befitting of his mission as every Messenger was sent as an obliterator of disbelief. Therefore, what greater misfortune can befall someone except that he reverts back to disbelief after having believed in Islâm and in the Messenger (ﷺ)? Such disbelief will only lead to fitnah and a painful torment.

In summary, we can understand that the greatest of 'fitnah' that results from a Muslim opposing the Messenger (ﷺ) and rejecting his Sunnah is disbelief, for which Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) will not forgive and for which there is 'a painful torment' as mentioned in ayâh 63 or Surah al-Noor.

Innovation:

Linguistically innovation (bid'ah) in Deen refers to anything that originated, or was innovated which did not exist before or have a precedence, nor does it have a root in the Shari'ah. One factor that helps the propagation of bid'ah is a lax attitude and ignorance that treats religion as a personal hobby; those who promote bid'ah are usually found to lack knowledge and do not take their Deen seriously. Nor who they seek answers from the Qur'ân and Sunnah.

From amongst the major dangers of innovation and its evil effects is that it is a pre-cursor to disbelief which we have explained as being a consequence of opposing the Messenger (ﷺ). Innovation involves making unfounded and baseless statements on behalf of Allâh and His Messenger (ﷺ) or doing acts that have no basis in the 'asl (fundamental principles) of the sources. On this matter, the Qur'ân and ahadeeth are clear on the severity of this sin, which is nothing less than taking a seat in the Hellfire. Innovation is an assumption to 'correct' the Prophet (ﷺ) or claiming that he (ﷺ) had not delivered the message of Islâm (may Allâh protect us from such evil thoughts). Innovation is a declaration of abandoning the Sunnah and accusing the Messenger (ﷺ) of not completely conveying the message of Islâm. It is in essence, competing with the Messenger (ﷺ) in his Prophethood and altering the religion. Innovation leads to divisions within the Muslim 'Ummah and igniting disputes and ill-feelings.

The fitnah of innovation is equally devastating as disbelief because, where disbelief may affect one person; innovation affects a whole group of people or society. Furthermore one may repent from disbelief and become a Muslim again, but innovation by its very nature is not repented from as the innovator regards it as something good and commendable. To this end, the Messenger (ﷺ) would say: "The best of the speech is the Book of Allâh, and the best of the guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. And the most evil affairs are their innovations; and every innovation is error." [Saheeh Muslim, 4/1885]

All acts of worship that are not legislated by Allâh and His Messenger (ﷺ) are prohibited in the religion and are thus rejected. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allâh has withheld repentance from every person who commits a Bid'ah until he abandons his Bid 'ah." [Saheeh At-Targheeb]. Also, those who innovate

(in the religion) are included in the ayâh: **Or have they partners with Allâh (false deities) who have instituted for them a religion which Allâh has not allowed?**" (Al Shoora: 21)

Innovation, which has been described as the most evil of affairs is indeed a fitnah that arises from opposition to, and the abandonment of all or part of the Sunnah. Hassaan ibn 'Atiyyah (d.120H) said: "No people introduce an innovation into their religion, except that its like from the Sunnah is ripped away from them." [Sunan ad-Dârimî (1/45); classed saheeh]

When the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) says something or does something or gives approval to something or refrains from something in the Deen, no one can add to it or subtract from it. Innovation is from the major sins of Islâm and leads to the replacement of a Sunnah with something that is not part of Islâm. The fitnah of innovation upon the proponents of innovation is indeed of a weighty proportion because they have succeeded in corrupting particular aspects of the Deen. This also means that not only will they be held accountable for themselves, but also for every person who follows the innovation and preaches it to others. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam will have the reward for that and the reward of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest. And whoever sets a bad precedent in Islam will bear the burden of sin for that, and the burden of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their burden in the slightest." [Saheeh Muslim, 1017]

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Say (O Muhammad to mankind), if you (truly) love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allâh is Al-Ghafoor (the All-Forgiving), Ar-Raheem (the All-Merciful).**

One of the nullifiers of faith as stated by the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is the abandonment of his guidance. Personal emotions and desires have no place when it comes to the establishment of truth in Islâm. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "None of you will believe, until his desires are in accordance with what I have been sent with." (Baihaqi)

Many who claim to be Muslims do acts of worship that contradict the teachings of Islâm, or they practice certain innovated rites which have no foundation in the Deen of Allâh. They follow their whims and desires as Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Have you (O Muhammad) seen him who has taken as his ilâh (Allâh) his own desire? Would you then be a Wakîl (a disposer of his affairs or a watcher) over him?** (Al Furqân: 43)

Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنهما) said: "Moderation upon the Sunnah is better than exertion in innovation." It is highly likely for those who neither obey nor accept the Sunnah that they drown in innovation.

Sufyaan ath-Thawree said: "No word or action will be correct until it conforms with the Sunnah." Those words or actions that do not conform with the Sunnah are damned because it shows opposition to the Messenger of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

There is no substitute for guidance; if there is no guidance then there can only be misguidance and we know that every innovation is indeed misguidance. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said (as part of a lengthy hadeeth): "...for those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my Sunnah and that of the rightly-guided caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance (error)." [Saheeh Muslim, 4590]

Muslims are required to abstain from falsely alleging an issue or matter as being part of Islâm, for this would indeed lead one astray, and eventually lead him to Hell. The Messenger (ﷺ) said: **"Whoever innovates or accommodates an innovator then upon him is the curse of Allâh, His Angels and the whole of mankind."** [Saheeh Bukhâri, 12/41 and Saheeh Muslim, 9/140]

Those who forsake his (ﷺ) Sunnah can never achieve salvation and those who subscribe to innovation can never achieve salvation. It is from the main affects of opposing the Messenger (ﷺ) that the innovations which we are commanded to avoid, actually become a fitnah through which Allâh will neither forgive nor purify as Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) mentions in Surah al-Ma'idah: 41.

A painful torment is threatened upon those opposing the Messenger's Sunnah. The people of innovation, like the people of disbelief are neither forgiven nor purified. The apparent meaning of not being forgiven nor purified is that a painful torment is all but a foregone conclusion, unless the person repents from innovation and disbelief they are involved in.

The worst thing that results from innovation is forging lies against the Prophet e. This is a grave sin as the Messenger (ﷺ) said: To forge a lie against me is not like forging a lie against any person; whoever forges a lie against me, let him assure his seat in Hell-Fire.' [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 1229]

The Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Indeed the most truthful of speech is the Book of Allâh, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad e and the most evil of matters are the innovated ones, and every (religious) innovation is a Bid'ah, and every Bid'ah is a means of deviation, and every deviation would lead to the Fire." (Ibn Khuzaimah, No. 1785)

The great Companion, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنهما) said: "Follow and do not innovate, for you have been given that which is sufficient (and every innovation is misguidance). [Related by Wakee' in az-Zuhd, No. 315 and Abu Khaythamah in Kitaabul-'Ilm, No.54; authenticated by al-Albani]

As a practical example, we can see how the Imaams of Ahlus Sunnah understood the evils of innovation. A man came to Imaam Mâlik (d.179H) *rahimahullaah* and said: O Abu 'Abdullaah! Where shall I enter the state of ihraam (the dress for one intending to do hajj)? So Imaam Mâlik replied: "From Dhul-Hulayfah, where Allâh's Messenger (ﷺ) entered the state of ihraam." The man then said: But I wish to enter the state of ihraam at the mosque by his grave. Imaam Mâlik said: "Do not do that, for I fear for you the fitnah." The man asked: What fitnah are you referring to, since it is only a few extra miles: So Imaam Mâlik said: "And what fitnah can be greater than for you to think that you have attained some virtue, which Allâh's Messenger (ﷺ) fell short of. Have you not heard the saying of Allâh: **"Let those beware who oppose the command of the Prophet (ﷺ), lest they are afflicted with fitnah (trial), or lest they are afflicted with a painful punishment."** [Imâm ash-Shâtibee, Al I'tisâm, 1/132]

In summary, we can understand that amongst the greater 'fitnah' that results from a Muslim opposing the Messenger (ﷺ) is the appearance of innovation through which Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) tries the disobedient ones. To stem the tide of innovation and to remove ourselves from the threat of Allâh in ayâh 63 of Surah al-Noor, we need to first and foremost return to the Qur'ân and the Sunnah, understand and practise them as they were understood and practised by the earliest generations of Muslims.

Trials and Tribulations:

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says regarding the believing Muslims: **Or do you think that you shall enter the Garden (of bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? they encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allâh?" Ah! Verily, the help of Allâh is (always) near!** (Al Baqarah: 214)

The suffering and adversity that Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) speaks of in this ayâh is for the righteous from amongst His slaves; those who are tried and tested with this type of fitnah is in order for them to be raised in ranks and be purified of their sins (see appendix 2). However those who oppose the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Sunnah will have no share of this purification because they reject the very source of Islâm. This is what differentiates those mentioned in ayâh 63 of Surah al-Noor and the believing Muslims.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) tells us about the bani Isra'eel (children of Israel): **Verily, We took the covenant of the Children of Israel and sent them Messengers. Whenever there came to them a Messenger with what they themselves desired not - a group of them they called liars, and others among them they killed. They thought there will be no fitnah, so they became blind and deaf; after that Allâh turned to them (with Forgiveness); yet again many of them became blind and deaf. And Allâh is the All-Seer of what they do.** (Al Mâ'idah: 70-71)

It is indeed astounding that just as a group of bani Isra'eel rejected guidance from their Prophets and Messengers which they did not desire, so too some Muslims reject and oppose the guidance brought to them by their Messenger. Bani Isra'eel thought their rejection would not cause a fitnah, yet Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) punished them and then turned to them with forgiveness; yet again many of them did not heed the warnings.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **That was the Way of Allâh in the case of those who passed away of old, and you will not find any change in the Way of Allâh.** (Al Ahzâb: 62)

Muslims have no immunity from fitnah just as the nations before them did not have immunity. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) put them through trials and tribulations and indeed He (سبحانه و تعالى) will put the Muslims through fitan. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And fear the fitnah which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong (but it may afflict all the good and the bad people), and know that Allâh is Severe in punishment.** (Al Anfâl: 25)

Here Allâh warns us of a fitnah that overtakes a whole people and society, the good and the bad because of the wrong a section of them commit. What greater wrong can there be to reject the Messenger and thereby reject the means of salvation? Ibn Katheer mentions in his tafseer: "Allâh warns His believing servants of a fitnah, trial and test, that encompasses the wicked and those around them. Therefore, such fitnah will not be restricted to the sinners and evildoers. Rather, it will reach the others if the sins are not stopped and prevented." Ibn `Abbâs said: "Allâh commanded the believers to stop evil from flourishing among them, so that Allâh does not encompass them all in the torment (of fitnah)."

Ibn Katheer further stated: "Of the most precise things that have been mentioned under this topic (of fitnah), is what was recorded by Imâm Ahmad from Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (رضي الله عنهما) that the Messenger of Allâh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "By He in Whose Hand is my soul! You will enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, or Allâh will send a punishment upon you from Him; you will supplicate then to Him, but He will not answer your supplication."

Imâm Ahmad recorded that Abu ar-Riqad said: "I heard Hudhayfah saying: 'A person used to utter one word during the time of the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) and become a hypocrite on account of it. I now hear such words from one of you four times in the same sitting. Surely, you will enjoin good, forbid evil and encourage each other to do good or Allâh will surround you all with torment, or make the wicked among you become your leaders. The righteous among you will then supplicate, but their supplication will not be accepted.'"

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنهما), the Prophet's wife, said, "I heard the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) saying: "If sins become apparent in my Ummah, Allâh will surround them with punishment from Him. I said, 'O Allâh's Messenger! Will they have righteous people among them then?' He said 'Yes'. I asked, 'What will happen to them?' He said, They will be stricken as the people, but they will end up with Allâh's forgiveness and pleasure." [Musnad Ahmad]

The Messenger (ﷺ) on this matter narrated: "This people (i.e. 'Ummah) of mine is one in which mercy is shown. They will have no punishment in the next world, but their punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed." [Sunan Abu Da'wud, 4265]

We see the "mercy" that the Messenger (ﷺ) explained here, is for the believing Muslims and not those who oppose Islâm by opposing him and his Sunnah; to them no mercy will be shown as Allâh (سبحانه و تعالی) says: **No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you (Muhammad) their judge in the disputes between them and then do not resist what you decide and submit themselves [to you] completely.** (An-Nisâ': 65)

If one is not a believer as the ayâh indicates, then what is he? Abandoning the Messenger's (ﷺ) judgment equates to abandoning his Sunnah and abandoning the Sunnah equates to disbelief and apostasy. Those from amongst the Muslims who ignorantly oppose the Sunnah need to be made aware of this cataclysmic mistake before a fitnah befalls them in this life as a form of punishment. If they persist upon their opposition to the Sunnah, then they need to fear an eternal torment that has been prepared for the disbelievers in the hereafter.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالی) said in a hadeeth Qudsi: "Whoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine, I shall be at war with him..." Therefore, what would be the case of the one who declares enmity to His final Messenger?

Afflictions:

This comes in many ways and forms; some are physical like deterioration of health, while others related to one's family and wealth etc. Those who abandon Islâm by abandoning the Sunnah must understand what Allâh (سبحانه و تعالی) said about Bani Isra'eel in Surah al Mâ'idah 70-71. It was their desires that led them to oppose their Prophets; had they accepted and obeyed the words of their Lord and followed His Prophets, their trials would not have been as severe. For Muslims who disbelieve by opposing the Sunnah should know what Allâh (سبحانه و تعالی) said: **Say: "He has power to send calamities on you, from above and below, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance - each from the other." See how We explain the signs that they may understand.** (An An'âm: 63)

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says about the past nations: **Verily, We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you (O Muhammad). And We seized them with extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss in health with calamities so that they might believe with humility.** (An An'âm: 42)

Indeed these ayât contain a lesson for us; first and foremost of which is Allâh's Help and Mercy for those who do not commit shirk. We also learn that man is ungrateful and returns the favours of the Almighty by rejecting His commands and worshipping false deities. He (سبحانه و تعالى) has the power to send calamities upon us yet we reject this and wallow in self denial and reject the guidance. The Almighty (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And if Allâh touches you with harm, none can remove it but He, and if He touches you with good, then He is Able to do all things.** (An An'âm: 17)

He (سبحانه و تعالى) also says: **If Allâh helps you, none can overcome you; and if He forsakes you, who is there after Him that can help you? And in Allâh (Alone) let believers put their trust.** [Aal 'Imrân: 160]

We must know that just as there is no associate with Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) in his Worship, Lordship and Names and Attributes, likewise there is no associate with the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in his Messengership and his Risalâh (message) through which laws are established. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **O you who believe! Answer Allâh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he (Muhammad) calls you to that which will give you life...** (Al Anfâl: 24)

In this ayâh, Allâh commands the Muslims to respond to Him and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This response and 'answering to the call' means to believe in the Qur'ân and the Sunnah; and put into practise what they teach. Responding to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) assures Muslims of receiving that which gives life. If the Qur'ân and Sunnah has been described as something that gives life, what do you think would bring death if not opposition to it?

Without the Qur'ân and Sunnah there is no life for a Muslim; everything else will only bring disbelief and misery. As previously mentioned regarding Surah al Anfâl, ayâh 25, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) tells us to fear affliction or tumult that won't necessarily be directed at the wrong-doers, rather when it comes, it envelopes everyone. For those Muslims (ignorant or otherwise) who oppose the Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), it then becomes a critical communal duty of the learned and righteous Muslims to teach them, guide them and bring them back to the straight path. Otherwise, there is a fear that the affliction which Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) speaks of will be visited upon the believers as well as the disbelievers who oppose the Sunnah.

'Ubada ibn Sâmî (رضي الله عنهما) narrated: "I, along with a group of people, gave the pledge of allegiance to Allâh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). He said, "I take your Pledge on the condition that you (1) will not join partners in worship with Allâh, (2) will not steal, (3) will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, (4) will not kill your offspring, (5) will not slander, (6) and will not disobey me when I order you to do good. Whoever among you will abide by his pledge, his reward will be with Allâh, and whoever commits any of those sins and receives the punishment in this world, that punishment will be an expiation for his sins and purification; but if Allâh screens him, then it will be up to Allâh to punish him if He will or excuse Him, if He will." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 9/560]

What is interesting to note in point (6) above is that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) made it a condition to accept the pledge from these Sahâbah that they will not disobey him when he orders them to do good. We know that every legislated Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is good and brings about goodness in every way. This incident shows that those present at this pledge never opposed the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)

(وَسَلَّمَ) and his Sunnah because they knew the severity of the pledge and the obedience that it demanded by virtue of divine inspiration that was revealed to him.

In fact the Sahâbah were most keen and prompt in following his (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) Sunnah, even if it was something small or what we now consider insignificant in our times. Hudayfah ibn Yaman (رضي الله عنهما) said: "What ". They witnessed the revelation of the Qur'ân and no one understood its message and implication better than them. We should strive to be as keen as them and understand the finer details of Islâm as they understood them and live and breathe the Sunnah as they did.

Earthquakes:

From the fitnah of opposing the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Sunnah is that Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) will try Muslims with natural disasters like the earthquake.

Earthquakes are one of the great signs of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) with which He tests His creation as a reminder or to instil fear or as a form of punishment. When these signs occur, man recognises his helplessness and weakness, incapability and humble status before Allâh and his need of Him. He therefore turns to Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) in repentance, supplicating to Him and invoking Him with humility; in the hope that Allâh will lift this great distress from the people.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says about the past nations: **So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them to punishment, and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows.** (An An'âm: 44)

In our time, we have come to realise the frequency of earthquakes all too well and examples are too many to innumerate here. These phenomenon should lead each and every Muslim to ponder over the following statement of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) when he said: "The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until (religious) knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious learned men), earthquakes will be very frequent, time will pass quickly, afflictions will appear, murders will increase and money will overflow amongst you." [Saheeh Bukhâri, 2/146]

Earthquakes have been mentioned alongside the disappearance of knowledge; it can be deduced from the hadeeth that earthquakes are a result of Muslims' transgression against Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى), and what bigger transgression is there than committing shirk and opposing the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)? We can also include man's immorality and disobedience in general, which usually stem from ignorance and a strong sense of perversion and desires.

'Disappearance of knowledge' in the hadeeth can also denote a loss of Sunnah or a wilful opposition to it because it has become an apparent problem today, where many ignorant Muslims attempt to answer religious questions without any recourse to knowledge or qualification. They answer not from the sources of Islâm, but from their own desires! As Allâh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "Verily, Allâh does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the people but He takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars, so that when He leaves no learned person, people turn to ignorant as their leaders; then they are asked to deliver religious verdicts and they deliver them without knowledge, they go astray, and lead others astray." [Saheeh Muslim, 6462]

Further to the fitnah of earthquakes is what Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) has mentioned about the past nations who perished through them. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) mentions how the end came for the people of Saalih (AS): **So the earthquake seized them unaware, and they lay prostrate in their homes in the morning!** (Al A'râf: 78)

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) further mentions how the end came for the people of Shu'ayb (AS): **But the earthquake took them unaware, and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning!** (Al A'râf: 91)

Indeed Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) punished these nations primarily because they vehemently opposed their Prophets and abandoned their Sunnah. Had they accepted the authority of their Prophets, followed them and understood Allâh's favours through their guidance, they would not have been amongst the losers. They were met with torment in this life and what awaits them in the hereafter is far more painful.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says regarding the disbelievers: **Do you feel secure that He Who is in heaven will not cause you to be swallowed up by the earth when it shakes (as in an earthquake)?** (Al Mulk: 16)

Those who oppose the Messenger's Sunnah are categorised with disbelief and they should indeed be concerned of Allâh's threat. As for the Muslims and the righteous believers, the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "This people of mine are one to which mercy is shown. They will have no punishment in the next world, but their punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed." [Sunan Abu Da'wud, 4265]

As mentioned previously, the mercy that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explained here is for the believing Muslims and not those who have rejected Islâm by opposing him (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Sunnah. To them only painful torment be inflicted.

Killing and bloodshed:

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما) reported Allâh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: The last Hour will not be established until there is much *harj*. They asked: 'What is harj?' Thereupon he said: bloodshed. bloodshed. [Saheeh Muslim, 6903]

Killing and bloodshed is a fitnah which is never far from our news screens, the internet, newspapers and radio. It is perhaps the single most devastating fitnah upon the physical and mental psyche of the Muslims. With disunity and division of the Ummah and the resultant strife, bloodshed and oppression, never has this 'Ummah, which is supposed to be like a single human body, been as divided and fragmented as it is today. Whether on an international scale or on a national, regional, local or even down to organizational level, families and even with individuals, there is division and discord. Its reasons and causes are many; primary of which is the abandonment of the Deen of Islâm and the relegation of the Qur'ân and Sunnah from our lives.

'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنهما) said: "If you were to abandon the Sunnah of your Prophet then you would go astray." So if the 'Ummah goes astray then it is destroyed. Therefore 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood said to that group: "O 'Ummah of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)! How quickly you head into destruction." [Saheeh Muslim (5/156)]

Such destructions are physical as well as spiritual. Physical whereby our families, wealth and lives are damaged or taken away; and spiritual where our salvation is destroyed and not redeemed until and unless we return back to our Deen. Allâh said about the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his 'Ummah generally:

You are the best of peoples ever raised for mankind, you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in Allâh. (Aal 'Imrân: 110)

We should look to the Companions and learn from them and try to be like them; not just with in matters of 'aqeedah or beliefs, because there can be no value to belief without it being translated into actions and behaviour.

We again end this point with the hadeeth of the Messenger (ﷺ) who said: "This people of mine are one to which mercy is shown. They will have no punishment in the next world, but their punishment in this world will be trials, earthquakes and being killed." [Sunan Abu Da'wud, 4265]

This mercy is for the Muslims, whether they are weak or sinful. It is not to be understood to apply to those who consciously oppose the Messenger (ﷺ). Ibn al-Qayyim said: With regard to the "fitnah" which Allâh attributes to Himself or which His Messenger attributes to Him, as in the ayâh: 'Thus We have tried [fatannaa] some of them with others' [al-An'aam 6:53] and the words of Moosa: 'It is only Your trial [fitnatuka] by which You lead astray whom You will' [al-A'raaf 7:155] - that carries a different meaning, which is a test or trial from Allâh to His slaves by means of good things and bad, blessings and calamities. This is one thing; the fitnah of the mushrikeen is another thing; the fitnah or trial of the believer by means of his wealth, children and neighbour is another thing; the fitnah (tribulation, differences) that happen amongst the Muslims, like the fitnah that happened between the supporters of 'Ali and Mu'awiyah, and between him and the people of the camel, and between Muslims when they fight one another or boycott one another, is another thing. [Zaad al-Ma'aad, 3/p.170]

Overpowering by tyrants or tyrannical over-rule:

Causes of weakness of the Muslims are due to their having left the clear and pure religion of Islâm. Humiliation has entered into their ranks for this very same reason; with sickness and diseases in their hearts bringing about worldly calamities. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allâh and His Messenger, to judge between them, is that they say: "We hear and we obey." And such are the prosperous ones (who will live forever in Paradise).** (An Noor: 51)

We have come to a time where Muslims hear but they do not obey! They fitnah of 'progressive' and 'liberal' Muslims is perhaps the single-most devastating in our times. They seek to re-define and negotiate Islam according to their desires to change the very foundations upon which Islâm is built. They continue to respect the Qur'ân while simultaneously reject the Sunnah or at least seek ways to re-interpret its meaning.

Al-Miqdam (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) said: "I have indeed been given the Qur'ân and something similar to it besides it. Yet, the time will come when a man leaning on his couch will say, 'Follow the Qur'ân only; what you find in it as halâl, take it as halâl, and what you find in it as harâm, take it as harâm.' But truly, what the Messenger of Allâh has forbidden is like what Allâh has forbidden." [via hadeeth of Al-'Irbâd ibn Sâriyah in Sunan Abu Da'wud and Darimi]

History of Islâm has categorically shown how tyrannical rule beset the 'Ummah when they began to fight amongst themselves and when they began to argue about their religion and split into groups and sects. The biggest tragedy and worst of consequences from these crises gave rise to forces who oppose the truth. The worst opposition is the opposition to the Sunnah.

As part of lengthy hadeeth reported by Ibn Mâjah (no.4019) and Abu Nu'aym in Hilyatul-Awliyaa (8/333-334), the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "...If people should begin to cheat in weighing out goods, you should realise that this has never happened without a drought and famine befalling the people and their rulers oppressing them."

Cheating is from the major sins in Islam and furthermore because of it, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) punished the people of Madyan to whom Prophet Shu'ayb was sent. Could it be possible that those who follow the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) fall into wilful cheating? No, this could only occur if the Sunnah was absent from the person's life or played a very small role.

We must understand that Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) is Al-Khaafid, al-Raafi' (the Abaser, the Exalter), He (سبحانه و تعالى) brings down tyrants and humiliates the arrogant Pharaohs and He (سبحانه و تعالى) is the One who raises His close friends (awliya') in status through their acts of obedience; He raises them in status, supports them against their enemies and grants them the ultimate victory. No one can prevail except the one whom Allâh raises and no one can be lowered except the one whom He humiliates. Those who oppose the Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah are indeed worthy of humiliation and if fitnah does not make them amend their misguided ways, then the fitnah will become a punishment in this world and a far greater torment will be prepared for him in the hereafter.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says regarding misguidance: **And whomsoever Allâh wants to put in fitnah, you can do nothing for him against Allâh.** (Al Mâ'idah: 41)

Just as Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) allows the fitnah of tyranny to rule over Muslims, He is also the One who brings down the tyrants and their tyrannical rule. If the fitnah is a test or a trial, it needs to be overcome with patience. If the fitnah is a punishment, then it can never be overcome with physical opposition (e.g. rebelling against the fitnah of a tyrant). Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) inflicts fitnah and He alone can remove it. What a Muslim must do is learn the necessary lessons from it [see appendix 1]

Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) foretold us about tyranny when he said: "Prophethood will remain amongst you for as long as Allâh wishes it to, then Allâh will raise it up when He wishes to raise it up. Then there will be Khilaafah upon the manner of Prophethood and it will remain amongst you for as long as Allâh wishes it to, then Allâh will raise it up when He wishes to raise it up. Then there will be harsh kingship which will remain amongst you for as long as Allâh wishes it to, then Allâh will raise it up when He wishes to raise it up. Then there will be tyrannical kingship and it will remain amongst you for as long as Allâh wishes it to, then Allâh will raise it up when He wishes to raise it up. Then there will be Khilaafah upon the manner of Prophethood. Then he was silent." [Musnad Ahmad, 4/273]

Do you think that the emergence of 'tyrannical kingship' is due to what people's hands have earned? Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allâh, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself. And We have sent you (O Muhammad) as a Messenger to mankind, and Allâh is Sufficient as a Witness.** (An Nisâ': 79)

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) explains that whatever evil befalls us is from what our hands have earned. He (سبحانه و تعالى) then reminds us that He sent Muhammad (ﷺ) as a Messenger to mankind; it is indeed the mission of a Messenger to explain and guide people to the right way. Immediately after this ayah, says: **He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad), has indeed obeyed Allâh, but he who turns away, then we have not sent you (O Muhammad) as a watcher over them.** (An Nisâ': 80)

Obedience to the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is obedience to Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى); such obedience brings about goodness. Disobedience to the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is disobedience to Allâh, which brings about evil and the bad consequences thereof.

Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says in a Hadeeth Qudsi: "The most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him..." [Saheeh al Bukhâri]

And a fundamental and distinct part of what Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has enjoined upon mankind is obedience to Him and obedience to His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Disobedience will only drive a person farther away from Allâh and closer to His punishment.

Opposing the Sunnah Means Opposing the Qur'ân!

Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says: **Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight ... are dearer to you than Allâh and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allâh brings about His Decision (torment). And Allâh guides not the people who are *Al-Fâsiqûn* (the rebellious, disobedient to Allâh).** (Al Tawbah: 24)

Anas bin Mâlik (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "None of you will truly believe until I am more beloved to him than his father, his son and all of mankind." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, Muslim and others]

Being dear to someone means to love them; loving someone requires obedience to them and following them and emulating them and favouring them and being fearful of contradicting them. Imâm Ibn al-Qayyim said: "He who favours his beloved over himself can more easily favour him over his wealth ... Nobody's belief is complete until the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is dearer to him than himself, let alone his children or parents."

Ibn Hajar said: "An evidence of this love is if somebody were to favour losing something extremely precious to themselves rather than lose the chance to see Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) if indeed it were possible for them to see him. Indeed missing out on an opportunity to see the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is harsher and more heart-breaking for a person than losing extremely precious thing. If this were not the case, then the description of love would not be applicable to such a person. Moreover, the manifestation of love is not restricted to that, but also applies to supporting his Sunnah, defending what he came with and fighting those who opposes it."

Qâdhi 'Iyaadh said: "Most of these statements refer to the fruit of loving the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) but do not address its reality. The reality of loving the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) lies in making all that which one loves and favours correspond to everything that he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) loved and favoured." These actions usually emanate from one who has intense love for his beloved, either for the joy one finds in looking at him, the spiritual satisfaction or the kindness of the beloved."

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And whoever obeys Allâh and the Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom Allâh has bestowed favour of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of the truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.** (An Nisâ': 69)

A'ishah (رضي الله عنهما) reported that a man came to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and said: "O Messenger of Allâh! You are dearer to me than my family, my children and even myself. Sometimes I am sitting in my home and I remember you, and then I am overwhelmed with the desire to come and see you. When I think about your death and mine; I realise that when you die you will at the rank of the Prophets in paradise, but I fear that if I enter paradise, I will not be able to see you." A'ishah (رضي الله عنهما) continued: "The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not answer this man until Allâh revealed this verse (given above)." [At-Tabari and others]

Anas bin Mâlik (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that a man asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم): "When will the (last) hour come?" He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied: "What have you done to prepare for it?" The man replied: "Nothing, except the love I have for Allâh and His Messenger." The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied: "You will be (on the Day of Judgment) with those whom you love." Anas bin Mâlik (رضي الله عنهما) said: "We (his companions) never rejoiced at anything more than his words, when he said "You will be (on the Day of Judgment) with those whom you love."" Anas, may Allâh be pleased with him, continued: "I love the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), Abu Bakr and 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) and I hope to be with them (in the Hereafter) due to my love for them, even if I cannot do (the same amount of righteous deeds) as they do." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, Muslim and others]

The love of Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and fighting for the cause of Islam are criteria for success. Having the love of kinship and wealth more than Allâh and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and fighting for the cause of Islam is a recipe for torment and such people are rebellious to the orders of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) and disobedient to His commands.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day and remembers Allâh much.)** (Al Ahzâb: 21)

Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was sent to man and Jinn at large, to clarify matters that pertain to Deen, such as beliefs, Shari'ah and the likes thereof. No aqeedah (creed) would be accepted except his aqeedah, and no Shari'ah would be accepted, except his Shari'ah. No one would attain nearness to Allâh, His pleasure, and Jannah, except by submitting and completely following him in his sayings, actions, and aqeedah (belief), while believing in matters that pertain to the unseen world, and observing acts of worship and abstaining from sinful acts." [Fatâwa al-Kubra, pg. 178-179]

The sources of Shari'ah comprise of the Qur'ân and Sunnah. These two sources are the basis on which our religion is based upon. There is no Islâm without them for verily they both go hand in hand. It is unfortunate in our times that the Sunnah as an independent source of Islâmic legislation is not understood nor given the critical importance it deserves. In the times which we live in, the Sunnah of our beloved Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is pushed to the side. Many a people neglect to follow aspects of the Sunnah or they reject it altogether which is kufr.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **And whosoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment.** (An Nisâ':14)

Those who oppose the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) are disobeying Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and here Allâh lays the rights and the limits for the people; those who disobey Allâh and His Messenger and transgress His limits – These are the ones who will be cast into the Fire.

Further in the Qur’ân, we read: **It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allâh and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error.** (Al Ahzâb: 36)

Matters are decreed by Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) only and there is no third source of legislation in Islâm apart from these two. Disobeying Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) or His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is equal in terms of straying and liability for punishment, as Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says: **...And whosoever disobeys Allâh and His Messenger, then verily, for him is the Fire of Hell, he shall dwell therein forever.** (Al Jinn: 23)

Also: **And whoever defies and disobeys Allâh and His Messenger, then verily, Allâh is Severe in punishment.** (Al Anfâl: 13)

Those who opposed the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and disbelieved in his Sunnah will indeed be full of regret of the Day of Judgement as Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) says: **On that day those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger (Muhammad) will wish that they were buried in the earth, but they will never be able to hide a single fact from Allâh.** (An Nisâ’:42)

More than regret, the disbelievers will implore their Lord (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) for a second chance so that they may return to earth and embrace Islâm and follow the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): **And warn (O Muhammad) mankind of the Day when the torment will come unto them; then the wrong-doers will say: "Our Lord! Respite us for a little while, we will answer Your Call and follow the Messengers!"** (Ibraheem: 44)

In numerous places in Surah al Shu’ara, Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) mentions the words spoken by Prophets Nûh, Hûd, Lût, Sâlih and Shu’ayb (May Allâh’s peace be upon them all) to their people. It has a continuous theme of **‘Fearing Allâh and obeying them (i.e. the Prophets)’**. Allâh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) sends complete guidance and this includes explanation and practical implementation of the guidance by the Prophets and Messengers.

Failure to comply with Allâh’s (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) guidance by obeying of the Prophets led to the destruction of their people. For those who reject the Sunnah will also see fitnah and a painful torment for their disbelief, either in this world or the next. Those who oppose the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) will have the most wretched end, even if they do not encounter any of the hardships in this world due.

The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has said: “All of my ‘Ummah would enter Paradise, except him who refuses to enter it.’ It was said: ‘Who would refuse to enter it?’ He said: ‘Whoever obeys me would enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has refused to enter it.’” [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 6851]

Allâh says: **Indeed Allâh conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur’ân), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur’ân) and Al Hikmah (the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet), while before that they had been in manifest error.** (Aal ‘Imrân: 164)

With the abundant blessings of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) upon mankind, they continue to deny and transgress His limits. What greater transgression can there be than to oppose the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who was sent with the Qur'ân and with Wisdom (Sunnah), without which there can be no purification and without purification, there can be no success as Allâh says: **Indeed whosoever purifies himself shall achieve success.** (Al- A'laa – 14)

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.** (An-Nisâ': 59)

Allâh makes clear that the believer is one who obeys Allâh and obeys the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The Sunnah is intended to explain the Qur'ân. This can be broken down further into four categories:

1. **Sunnah details the summarised** - For example, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) tells us throughout the Qur'ân to establish the salâh (prayers). We know the value of prayer within our life and we know that it is the second pillar of Islâm. However, if Muslims were not required to follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then how would they establish the salâh without knowing how to perform it and what its conditions are?
2. **Sunnah limits the absolute** - We know that the Islâmic punishment (under an Islâmic system and state) for theft is to have hands cut off. However, the Arabic word 'yadd' (hand) has a number of literal meanings that including from shoulders down, or from the elbows down, or even from the wrist down. However, the Sunnah makes it clear what Allâh legislated in criminal matters and penal law.
3. **Sunnah affirms the Qur'ân** - For example, drinking alcohol is prohibited in the religion of Islâm as per the words of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) found in the Qur'ân. This fact is also affirmed by many ahadeeth of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).
4. **Sunnah brings rulings not directly found in the Qur'ân** - For example, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says in the Qur'ân He has made lawful for the believers all good and pure things and forbade for them the bad and unlawful things (see Surah [Al A'râf: 157](#)). Therefore, whatever is generally good and pure, Allâh has made lawful for us. However, an exclusion to this is eating the flesh of domesticated donkeys because it is impure as is mentioned in statements of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Examples of this nature are far too many.

The Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) were swift in their following and implementation of the Prophet's directives. Abu Nu'aym quotes 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar as saying: "Whoever desires to follow a straight path, should follow the path of those who passed away. They are the Companions of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They are the best among his 'Ummah, the purest in heart, the deepest in knowledge, and the farthest from false display of piety. They are a community whom Allâh chose for the company of His Prophet and the conveyance of His religion. Try to be like them in conduct and follow their way. They are the Companions of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). I swear by Allâh, the Lord of the Ka'ba, that they were on true guidance." [Abu Nu'aym, Hilyatul Awliyah, 1/305]

The Companions made no distinction between the commands of the Messenger (ﷺ) or those given by Allâh, because both the guidance came from the same divine source. The Prophet (ﷺ) would regularly spend time with his Companions, teaching them Sunnah. Anas bin Mâlik (رضي الله عنهما) said: "We sat with the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and we used to have sixty men among us. The Prophet (ﷺ) would tell us a hadeeth and then would leave. We would discuss the hadeeth in the gathering and not leave until it was implanted in all of our minds." [Abu Ya'la and Haythami, al-Zawâid, vol. 1 pg. 161]

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "May Allâh curse the women who tattoo their bodies and those who pluck their eyebrows; those who separate their teeth to make them look prettier and those who try to change the creation of Allâh." A woman named Umm Ya'qoob from the tribe of Banu Asad came to know of these words. She approached Ibn Mas'ood and said: "O Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman! It is said that you have cursed such and such women." He said: "Why should I not curse those whom the Prophet (ﷺ) cursed and who are cursed in the Book of Allâh as well." She said: "I have read whatever is contained between the two covers (i.e. the whole Qur'ân) and did not find this." Ibn Mas'ood replied: Did you not read the following verse? **"So take whatever the Messenger gives you and keep away from what he forbids you."** (Al Hashr: 7)

Indeed in this narration, Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنهما) lays out a golden rule in understanding the authority of the Sunnah and its status as an independent source of Islâmic law.

The mother of the believers A'ishah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that she heard the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) say, when he was amongst his Sahâbah: "I shall be at the haudh (Kauthar water spring) waiting for those who will come to me from among you. By Allâh, surely certain men will be prevented from reaching me and I shall say, 'O my Lord, (they) are from me and my 'Ummah.' He will say, 'You do not know what they did after you. They had been constantly turning back on their heels (from the religion).'" [Saheeh Muslim]

In another variation in Saheeh Bukhâri, members of the 'Ummah will be pulled away from the Prophet (ﷺ) by force and then a barrier will be set up between (ﷺ) and them. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) will say: "You do not know they turned Apostates as renegades (deserted their religion)." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 9/172-174]

The Messenger (ﷺ) himself will then call out to them to "stay away, he who does not follow my Sunnah is not from me." Indeed the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me." [Saheeh al Bukhâri and Muslim]

This matter is indeed of momentous proportion because those who will be pulled away from the Prophet (ﷺ) are those who were in opposition to the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Sunnah. Those who oppose the Sunnah will be prevented from drinking from haudh al-Kauthar. This incident for the disbelievers will be a pre-cursor to every other torment they will experience prior to and after the believers have been allowed to drink from the haudh. It also signifies a great hope of success on that defining day for those who will be in the company of the Messenger (ﷺ) and able to drink from his haudh and also be given intercession by the will of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى).

Those who abandon the Sunnah will lose a highly auspicious reward and be deprived of his intercession on the Day of Judgment. It is indeed strange that with the superiority of the 'Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ) above all others, it contains disbelievers as well as people who claim to be Muslim; those who wilfully oppose the Messenger (ﷺ) as much as they can and seek to justify their opposition to his Sunnah. They

need to be beware that those who oppose the Messenger's commandment may befall with some Fitnah or a painful torment be inflicted on them.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **O believers enter into Islâm completely and do not follow the footsteps of Shaitân, surely he is your clear-cut enemy. If you falter after receiving the clear-cut message, then keep in mind that Allâh is Mighty, Wise. Are they waiting for Allâh to come down to them in the shadow of clouds, along with the angels, and make His decision known? Ultimately all matters will be presented to Allâh for decision.** (Al Baqarah: 208-210)

This ayâh calls upon the believers amongst the Muslims to enter Islâm fully. Now one may say that he has already entered Islâm fully so this ayah does not apply to him. Merely saying the Shahâdah or being born and raised in a Muslim family does not make one a Muslim. Entering into Islâm fully means that we have the follow the teachings of Islâm without any exceptions, without any reservations and without focusing on one aspect of the Deen and rejecting another.

Are those who intentionally disobey the commands of Allâh and justify their disobedience, waiting for Allâh to come down from the heavens to make His decision known? Truly this will only happen at the Day of Judgement. Are we waiting for the Last Day or waiting for doors of repentance to close before we realise our mistakes and sins? Is it wise to choose a temporary and transient abode like this life over the infinite abode of the Hereafter?

The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "None of you truly believe, until I am dearer to you than your father, your children and all mankind." [Saheeh al Bukhâri and Muslim]

He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said: "He, who loves my Sunnah, loves me and he who loves me will enter with me in paradise." [Sunan Tirmidhi]

He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said during his final sermon: "I leave behind two things, if you hold fast unto them you shall never go astray: the Book of Allâh and my Sunnah." [Saheeh al Bukhâri and Muslim, Abu Da'wud, Tirmidhi, Nasâ'i, Ahmad]

While explaining the qualities of Muslims the Qur'ân says: **The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allâh and His Messenger, to judge between them, is that they say: "We hear and we obey." And such are the prosperous ones (who will live forever in Paradise).** (An Noor: 51)

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says in the Qur'ân: **"If you obey him (the Messenger), you shall be on the right guidance."** (An Noor: 54)

The danger of abandoning the Sunnah is such that it will lead to total spiritual failure for Muslims in this life and indeed the next. The severe consequences that have been highlighted above should be sufficient for each and every Muslim to assess how much or how little they regard the Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). They will evaluate themselves, their faith and their speech, their actions and their manners and whether their love of the Sunnah remains a mere claim on their lips or whether they really do understand their statements and are driven to put them into practice.

The 'painful torment' in ayâh 63 is indeed dire warning for Muslims who reject the Sunnah or pay little attention to it. The Sunnah comprehensively reflects Islâm in its theoretical and practical application. To reject it or to leave it is disbelief and akin to apostasy and without a doubt, its retribution has been further

elaborated by Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) in the following ayâh: **“As for those who disobey Allâh and His Messenger and overstep His limits, We will admit them into a Fire, remaining in it forever. They will have a humiliating punishment.”** (An Nisâ': 14)

Abandoning the Sunnah is in and of itself an overstepping of the limits set by Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى). The words “Let those who oppose the Messenger’s commandment...” and “those who disobey Allâh and His Messenger and overstep His limits” can be understood in the same context where opposing the Messenger’s commandment leads to fitnah and painful torment; whereas disobeying Allâh and His Messenger and overstepping His limits leads to an extension of that painful torment. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) explains this torment to be an eternal “humiliating punishment” in the fire of hell.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Is he who is on clear proof from His Lord, like those for whom their evil deeds that they do are beautiful for them, while they follow their own lusts?** (Muhammad: 14)

He (سبحانه و تعالى) also says: **And those who disbelieve and deny our Ayats (proofs, evidences) are those who will be the dwellers of the Hellfire.** (Al Mâ'idah: 10)

Imâm ad-Darimee records the following narration in his Sunan: "The loss of the religion starts with the abandonment of the Sunnah. Just as a rope breaks fibre by fibre, so does religion vanish with one by one abandoning the Sunnah."

Abal Minhal narrated that Abu Barza (رضي الله عنهما) said: "(O people!) Allâh makes you self-sufficient and has raised you high with Islâm and with Muhammad." [Saheeh al Bukhâri, 9/376]

Obedying the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) means accepting and complying with his Sunnah. The following are a few of the many of the ayât of the Qur'ân that speak of the obligation to follow the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

O you who believe, obey Allâh, the Messenger, and those in command among you. If you disagree about something, refer it back to Allâh and the Messenger, if you believe in Allâh and the Last Day. That is the best thing to do and gives the best result. (An Nisâ': 59)

So absolute is the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) status as a law-giver and legislator that Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) told believers to obey his decisions wholeheartedly and without any reservation: **No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you (Muhammad) their judge in the disputes between them and then do not resist what you decide and submit themselves [to you] completely.** (An-Nisâ': 65)

In another ayah, the authority of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is set out in clear and concise terms: **When Allâh and His Messenger have decided something, no believing man or woman has a choice about [following or not following] it. Anyone who disobeys Allâh and His Messenger is clearly misguided.** (Al-Ahzâb: 36)

In face of these clear-cut and precise evidence from the Qur'ân, to advocate turning one's back on the Sunnah of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) means rejection of Allâh and His Words (i.e. the Qur'ân). Indeed, the Companions lived their lives in such a way that all of their actions and words were in perfect accord with both the Qur'ân and the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) explanation and expounding of it. One Companion relayed the following quotation: "Allâh sent us Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as the Prophet at a time when we knew nothing. Whatever we see him do, we do the same, in the same way." [Nasâ'i, Taqseer 1]

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) reveals that the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commands and prohibitions will give people 'life': **O you who believe, respond to Allâh and to the Messenger when He calls you to what will bring you to life. Know that Allâh intervenes between a person and his heart and that you will be gathered to Him.** (Al Anfâl: 24)

In another ayâh, our Lord (سبحانه و تعالى) reveals: **The believers' reply, when they are summoned to Allâh and His Messenger so that he can judge between them, is to say, "We hear and we obey." They are ones who are successful.** (An Noor: 51)

Every ayâh in the Qur'ân that obligates obeying the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is connected with his infallibility, because he is under the protection of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى). Everything in the Sunnah is, in essence, based upon revelation: **Nor does he speak from whim. It is nothing but Revelation revealed.** (An Najm: 3-4)

Whenever disagreements arise, Muslims are obliged to turn to the Qur'ân and the Sunnah: **If you disagree about something, refer it back to Allâh and the Messenger, if you believe in Allâh and the Last Day. That is the best thing to do and gives the best result.** (An Nisâ': 59)

Not only did the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) transmit the Qur'ân he received from Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) to humanity, but he also explained it. When we refer to the Sunnah, we are not simply referring to a few words, we are talking about the character and person of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The Sunnah is the practical interpretation of the Qur'ân as we know from the hadeeth where A'ishah (رضي الله عنهما) described the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) character as the "walking Qur'ân". He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) embodied the guidance from Allâh and in this way, the Sunnah was also protected from corruption, misunderstanding, and distortion along with the Qur'ân because both are inter-dependent on each other.

O Prophet! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner, And as one who invites to Allâh by His Leave, and as a lamp spreading light. (Al Ahzâb: 45-46)

These ayât of Surah al Ahzâb endowed the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) with every praiseworthy quality. He is a witness to mankind by the fact that he has conveyed the message to them. He is a warner to those that reject Islam and just as a lamp spreads light, so to does his Sunnah to those that accept Allâh's Judgment by loving His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and obeying him.

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Say (O Muhammad to mankind), if you (truly) love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allâh is Al-Ghafoor (the All-Forgiving), Ar-Raheem (the All-Merciful).** (Aal Imrân: 31)

An indication of one's love for Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى), therefore, is following His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), for doing so reveals that one is a follower of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى). No believer can regard obedience to Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) as sufficient and abandon obedience to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) gives the following glad tidings to those who comply with the Sunnah: *"Whoever gives life to my Sunnah certainly loves me, and whoever loves me is with me in Paradise."* [Sunan Tirmidhi]

While the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) imparts the above glad tidings to those who adhere, practise and teach his Sunnah; in the Qur'ân, Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) warns of the terrible consequences that result from rebelling against the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم): **... But those who hurt Allâh's Messenger (Muhammad) will have a painful torment.** (Al Ahzab: 61)

Hurting the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) implies rejecting him or insulting him as the pagan Quraysh did; they also sought to harm him physically. In reality those who hurt the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) are hurting themselves because Allâh has promised a 'painful torment' for them.

We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by Allâh's Leave. If they (hypocrites), when they had been unjust to themselves, had come to you (Muhammad) and begged Allâh's Forgiveness, and the Messenger had begged forgiveness for them: indeed, they would have found Allâh All-Forgiving (One Who accepts repentance), Most Merciful. (An Nisâ': 64)

Despite the kufr of those who oppose the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) is the Most Merciful and ready to forgive those who are sincere in their repentance to Him and ready to mend their ways and follow the truth entirely. Turning one's back on the Sunnah of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), who was most affectionate toward his 'Ummah and most sensitive to any harm that might befall them, is showing ingratitude to such a great blessing: **Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muhammad) is anxious over you (to be rightly guided, to repent to Allâh, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins, in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hell-fire), for the believers (he SAW is) full of pity, kind, and merciful. (At Tawbah: 128)**

When Muslims can never oppose Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى), so how can it be that they even contemplate opposing the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) whom Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) sent? He, the Most High says:

Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allâh. (An Nisâ': 80)

(And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger. (An Nisâ': 59)

He did not say: refer to so-and-so, rather He said "refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination." And He said:

And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allâh (He is the ruling Judge). (And say O Muhammad to the disbelievers) Such is Allâh, my Lord in Whom I put my trust, and to Him I turn in all of my affairs and in repentance. (As Shoorâ: 10)

Those who followed the Companions remained steadfast upon the Sunnah as sought salvation through it. Imâm Mâlik said during a lecture in the Prophet's Masjid: "There is no one among us but he may refute or be refuted, except the occupant of this grave - meaning the Messenger of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)."

Ibn Wahb said: "I heard Mâlik being asked about cleaning between the toes during ablution. He said, 'The people do not have to do that.' I did not approach him until the crowd had lessened, when I said to him, 'We know of a sunnah about that.' He said, 'What is that?' I said, 'Laith ibn Sa'd, Ibn Lahee'ah and 'Amr ibn al-Haarith narrated to us from Yazeed ibn 'Amr al-Ma'aafiri from Abu 'Abdur-Rahman al-Hubuli from Mustawrid ibn Shaddaad al-Qurashi who said, 'I saw the Messenger of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) rubbing between his toes with his little finger.' He said, 'This hadeeth is sound; I had not heard of it at all until now.' Afterwards, I heard him being asked about the same thing, on which he ordered cleaning between the toes." [from the introduction to Al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel of Ibn Abi Haatim, p. 31-2]

Imâm Ahmad said: "I am amazed at people who know the isnâd and its soundness (meaning hadeeth of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) - but they follow the view of Sufyân (meaning al-Thawree). Sufyân was a great Imâm,

yet despite that, Ahmad criticised the one who ignores the hadeeth and follows his opinion. Then Imâm Ahmad recited the verse: And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment (i.e., his Sunnah – legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statement, etc.) beware lest some fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant, etc.) befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them."

And examples of this nature from the Imams and scholars amongst the salaf are indeed numerous.

The Prophet (ﷺ) himself said: "May Allâh make radiant, the face of one who heard one of my sayings and then carried it to others. It may be that one carries understanding without being a person of understanding; it may be that one carries understanding to someone who possesses more understanding than he." [Abu Dâ'wud, Tirmidhi, Nasâ'i, Ibn Mâjah, Ahmad, Dârimi, Tabarâni]

The Prophet (ﷺ) also warned the Companions about conveying something from him which may not be correct: "Convey from me, even if it is just a verse... And whoever falsely attributes something to me, then let him take his own seat in the Hell-fire." [Saheeh al Bukhâri]

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) said: "All of my 'Ummah will enter Al-Jannah except whoever refuses." They (the companions) said: And who would refuse? He (ﷺ) replied: "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me will have refused." [Saheeh al Bukhâri]

Jaabir Ibn Abdullah (رضي الله عنهما) said: Whoever obeys Muhammad, obeys Allâh. Whoever disobeys Muhammad, disobeys Allâh, Muhammad divides between people (between those who believe and obey him and those who disbelieve and disobey him). [Al-Bukhâri]

Al-'Irbâd ibn Sâriyah (رضي الله عنهما) also reported that: "The Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) led us in prayer one day, then he turned to us and exhorted us strongly... (he said), 'Pay attention to my sunnah (way) and the way of the Rightly-guided Khaleefahs after me, adhere to it and hold fast to it.'" [Sunan Abu Dâ'wud]

Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The example of me and what Allâh has sent me with, is like the example of a man who came to a people saying: 'O my people! I saw the army of the enemy with my own eyes. I am the naked warner (the habit of the Arabs before Islâm was that when one wanted to warn his people of an invading army, he did so while naked to be more dramatic). Therefore, escape, escape!' Some of his people obeyed him and left at night, travelling at ease, and they were safe. Others disbelieved and in the morning they were still in their places. The army attacked them in the morning, destroyed and overwhelmed them. This is the example of whoever obeys me and follows what I was sent with, and the example of whoever disobeys me and disbelieves in what I was sent with of truth." [Al-Bukhâri and Muslim]

Imâm Shâfi'i said: "I do not know of anyone among the Sahâbah and Tâbi'een who narrated a report from the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) without accepting it, adhering to it and affirming that this was sunnah. Those who came after the Tâbi'een, and those whom we met did likewise: they all accepted the reports and took them to be sunnah, praising those who followed them and criticizing those who went against them. Whoever deviated from this path would be regarded by us as having deviated from the way of the Companions of the Prophet (Al-'Irbâd ibn Sâriyah (رضي الله عنهما)) and the scholars who followed them, and would be considered as one of the ignorant."

The fact that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allâh means that we must believe and follow everything he said and obey every command he gave. It is the nature of Prophethood and Messengership that they be followed as they explained and instructed the people in addition to the revelation they receive. It is arrogant and futile to make a distinction between the Sunnah and the Qur'ân because obedience and adherence is required for both. Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) said: **We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by Allâh's Leave.** (An-Nisâ': 64)

The greatest aim of Muslim is to attain Allâh's Mercy and forgiveness; in this regards we understand the Words of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) clearly when He says in the Noble Qur'ân: **And obey Allâh and the Messenger (Muhammad) that you may obtain mercy.** (Aal 'Imrân: 132)

Can Mercy be achieved without obeying the Messenger (ﷺ)? The ruling concerning those who deny the Sunnah or even the importance of the Sunnah is that they are non-Muslims because they deny and reject a well-established and fundamental part of the Deen of Islam.

May Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) make us among those whom He loves, and among those who follow the footsteps of His messenger (ﷺ). And indeed only Allâh's Help is sought in correcting our affairs and guiding us to success.

But honour, power and glory belong to Allâh, His Messenger (Muhammad SAW), and to the believers, but the hypocrites know not. (Al Munafiqoon: 8)

A Word on Following and Obeying

Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) says: **Say (O Muhammad to mankind), if you (truly) love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allâh is Al-Ghafoor (the All-Forgiving), Ar-Raheem (the All-Meriful). Say, Obey Allâh and His Messenger. But if they turn away then Allâh does not love the disbelievers.** (Aal 'Imrân: 31-32)

Ittabi'ooni (follow me) is from the root letters 'taa ba ayn' and means to follow one very closely, such that you follow their very footsteps. It also means to follow without being commanded. What does following the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then entail? It means to follow his Sunnah, his teachings and to follow the way he lived his life and taught to others.

Following the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the condition to gain Allâh's Love. If one does not love and follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), yet claims to love Allâh, his love for Allâh will not be accepted from him. Thus, we learn that the only way to gain Allâh's Love is through following the footsteps of His messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Then Allâh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says in the following ayâh, أَطِيعُوا – 'Obey' and it is from the letters taw wou ayn. From this root, comes the meaning of obeying willingly, out of happiness and full acceptance of the command. What is the difference between *obeying* and *following* in these verses? Let's briefly see the difference:

- Attee'oo (obeying) refers to the commands of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and as the ayâh mentions, if one does not obey his commands, he will be among the Kâfireen (disbelievers).
- Ittabi'ooni (following) refers to emulating the deeds of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Following surpasses obeying, because one is doing the obligatory actions as well as the recommended ones. Furthermore, following the Sunnah is done sincerely out of love for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and this gains the Love of Allâh.

Obeying is mandatory while following is adhering to the Sunnah, and completing those acts that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded, encouraged, recommended or enacted either apparently or tacitly.

Here are two examples:

1. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded the men of this 'Ummah, "do not wear silk, for those who wear it in this life will not wear it in the hereafter." [Saheeh al Bukhâri and Muslim] - This falls under obeying, as from this hadeeth, we find that silk is prohibited for men, although it was not mentioned in the Qur'ân.
2. The mother of the believers, A'ishah (رضي الله عنهما) reported that when the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had performed the two rakah before Fajr prayer, he would lie on his right side. [Saheeh al Bukhâri]. This is "Ittibaa as-Sunnah" (following the Sunnah), one does not have to lie on their right side - they can pray the fardh salâh right away; however, out of sheer love and sincerely wanting to follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), it is recommended to lie on their right side. By doing these types of acts, we may gain the love of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى).

May Allâh (سبحانه و تعالى) make us among those whom He loves, and among those who follow the footsteps of His messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). And indeed only Allâh's Help is sought in correcting our affairs and guiding us to success.

Appendix 1

Fitnah is a form of punishment as well as a test for the Muslims. Those who are tested with fitnah is because either of a great evil they have incurred or because of a test through which Allâh (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) wants to purify them with. How does a Muslim know if a fitnah is a punishment or a test for them? Shaykh ibn Baaz (rahimahullah) responds to such a question by stating:

“Allâh (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) tests His slaves in prosperity and adversity, in hardship and ease. He sometimes tests them with these things to raise their grade and to enhance the status of those people and to double their good deeds... Sometimes Allâh does this due to the sins and transgression of the people, so that the punishment can be hurried. Like Allâh (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) said: **And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much.**

So, what is general for humans is that they are deficient, and they do not observe all the obligatory duties. Therefore, what afflicts them is due to their sins and shortcomings with regard to Allâh's commands. For this reason, if someone from the righteous slaves of Allâh is afflicted with some disease or something similar, then this is from the type of trials for the Prophets and Messengers, raising of their grades and increase of reward, to be an example for others, in having patience and contentment.

So briefly, it could be a test to raise grades and to make the reward greater, like Allâh does for some of the righteous people. It could be expiation for evil deeds, as is mentioned in the saying of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالیٰ): **whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof.**

...It could be that this is a punishment which has been hastened due to transgression by the slave and him not having hastened in repenting as is mentioned in the hadeeth of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he said: 'If Allâh intends good for His slave then He hastens his punishment in this world, and if Allâh prescribes evil for His slave, then Allâh holds back his sins until He recompenses them for him on the Day of Judgment.' [Tirmidhi; declared hasan]

It needs to be borne in mind that the ayâh of Surah al-Noor is explicit in it's condemnation of those who oppose the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Sunnah. The aspect of the fitnah being wrought upon a righteous Muslim as a test or a punishment for the one who sins (and for whom Allâh (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) wants to hasten his punishment), is preconditioned with the fact that they repent and return back to the Deen of Islâm completely by embracing the Sunnah. Those who reject the Sunnah have in and of themselves rejected the forgiveness and Mercy of Allâh (سبحانه و تعالیٰ) and their fitnah and punishment is but a mere portion of the painful torment that awaits them in the hereafter.

Appendix 2

There is great wisdom behind calamities, including the following:

1 – To attain true submission and servitude (‘uboodiyyah) to Allâh, the Lord of the Worlds.

Many people are slaves to their whims and desires and are not true slaves of Allâh. They say that they are slaves of Allâh, but when they are tested they turn on their heels and lose out in this world and in the Hereafter, and that is an evident loss. Allâh: **And among mankind is he who worships Allâh as it were upon the edge (i.e. in doubt): if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him he turns back on his face (i.e. reverts to disbelief after embracing Islâm). He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss.** (Al Hajj 22:11)

2 – Trials prepare the believers to prevail on earth

It was said to Imâm al-Shaafa’i: Which is better, patience or tests or prevailing? He said: Prevailing is the level attained by the Prophets, and there can be no prevailing except after trials. If a person is tried he will become patient, and if he remains patient he will prevail.

3 – Expiation of sins

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “Trials will continue to befall the believing man or woman in himself, his child and his wealth until he meets Allâh with no sin on him.” [Sunan Tirmidhi, 2399; classed Saheeh by al-Albaani in as-Saheehah, 2280]

Anas (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger of Allâh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “When Allâh wills good for His slave, He hastens the punishment for him in this world, and when Allâh wills ill for His slave, he withholds the punishment for his sins from him his sin until he comes with all his sins on the Day of Resurrection.” [Sunan Tirmidhi, 2396; classed Saheeh by al-Albaani in as-Saheehah, 1220]

4 – Attainment of reward and a rise in status

A’ishah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger of Allâh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “The believer is not harmed by a thorn or anything greater, but Allâh will raise him in status thereby, or erase a sin thereby.” [Saheeh Muslim, 2572]

5 – Calamities provide an opportunity to think about one's faults and shortcomings and past mistakes.

It makes a Muslim think: “If it is a punishment from Allâh, then what was the sin?”

6 – Calamity is a lesson in Tawheed, faith and trust in Allâh

It shows you in a practical sense what you really are, so you will realize that you are a weak slave, and you have no strength and no power except with your Lord, then you will put your trust in Him in a true sense, and will turn to Him in a true sense, and put aside your position, pride, arrogance, self-admiration and heedlessness, and you will understand that you are poor and in need of your Lord, and you are weak and need to turn to the Most Strong, the Almighty, may He be glorified.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Were it not that Allâh treats His slaves with the remedy of trials and calamities, they would transgress and overstep the mark. When Allâh wills good for His slaves, He gives him the medicine of calamities and trials according to his situation, so as to cure him from all fatal illnesses and diseases, until He purifies and cleanses him, and then makes him qualified for the most honourable position in this world, which is that of being a true slave of Allâh ('uboodiyyah), and for the greatest reward in the Hereafter, which is that of seeing Him and being close to Him." [Za'ad al-Ma'âd, 4/195]

7 – Calamities drive out self-admiration from our hearts and bring them closer to Allâh

Ibn Hajr stated: "Yoonus ibn Bukayr narrated in Ziyâdat al-Maghâzi that al-Rabee' ibn Anas said: A man said on the day of Hunayn: "We will never be defeated today for lack of numbers." That upset the Prophet (ﷺ) and then they were defeated.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "In His wisdom, Allâh decreed that the Muslims should first taste the bitterness of defeat, despite their great numbers and adequate equipment and strength, so as to humble some people who felt proud as a result of the conquest of Makkah and who had not entered His land and His sanctuary as the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) had entered it, bending his head whilst riding his horse to the extent that his chin almost touched the saddle, out of humbleness before his Lord." [Za'ad al-Ma'âd, 3/477]

Allâh says: **And that Allâh may test (or purify) the believers (from sins) and destroy the disbelievers.** (Aal 'Imrân 3:141)

Al-Qâsimi said about this ayâh: "i.e., to cleanse them and purify them of sin and of pride and arrogance. He also cleanses them of the hypocrites, and make them stand out distinct from them... then He mentions another reason, which is "to destroy the disbelievers", for if they prevail they will transgress and overstep the mark, which will be the cause of their downfall and destruction. The laws of Allâh dictate that when He wants to destroy His enemies and erase them, he makes available to them the means which will lead to their doom and eradication, among the greatest of which, after their kufr, is their transgression and tyranny in persecuting, opposing and fighting His close friends... Allâh destroyed those who waged war against the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) on the day of Uhud and persisted in kufr." [al-Qaasimi, 4/239]

8 – To demonstrate the true nature of people, for there are people whose virtue is unknown until calamity strikes

al-Fudayl ibn 'Iyâd said: "As long as people are doing fine, their true nature is concealed, but when calamity strikes, their true natures are revealed, so the believer resorts to his faith and the hypocrite resorts to his hypocrisy."

Abu Salamah (رضي الله عنهما) said: Many people were confused (i.e., after the Isra') and some people came to Abu Bakr and told him (in order to mock). He said: "I bear witness that he is telling the truth." They said: "Do you believe that he went to Syria in one night then came back to Makkah?" He said: "Yes, and I believe him in more than that, I believe what he says of the Revelation that comes to him from heaven." And because of that he was named al-Siddeeq." [Bayhaqi in al-Dalaa'il]

9 – Calamities strengthen people's resolve

Allâh chose for His Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) a hard life filled with all kinds of hardship from a young age, in order to prepare him for the great mission that awaited him, which none could bear but the strongest of men, who have gone through hardship and who are tested with calamities and bear them with patience.

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was born an orphan, then it was not long before his mother died too. Allâh reminded him of this when He said: **Did He not find you (O Muhammad) an orphan and give you a refuge?** (Ad Duha: 6)

It is as if Allâh wanted to prepare the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to bear responsibility and endure hardship from an early age.

10 – Another reason behind calamities and hardship is that a person becomes able to distinguish between true friends and friends who only have their own interests at heart.

11 – Calamities remind you of your sins so that you can repent from them.

Allâh says: **Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allâh, but whatever of evil befalls you is from yourself.** (An-Nisâ':79)

And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much. (Ash Shoorâ: 30)

Calamities offer a person an opportunity to repent before the greater punishment comes on the Day of Resurrection. Allâh says: **And verily, We will make them taste of the near torment (i.e. the torment in the life of this world, i.e. disasters, calamities) prior to the supreme torment (in the Hereafter), in order that they may (repent and) return.** (As Sajdah: 21)

The “near torment” is hardship in this world and other misfortunes that happen to a person. If life continues to be easy, a person may become conceited and arrogant, and think that he has no need of Allâh, so by His Mercy He tests people so that they may return to Him.

12 – Calamities show you the true nature of this world and its transience, and that it is temporary conveniences, and shows us that true life is that which is beyond this world, in a life in which there is no sickness or exhaustion.

Verily, the home of the Hereafter that is the life indeed (i.e. the eternal life that will never end), if they but knew. (Al 'Ankaboot: 64)

But this life is just hardship and exhaustion: **Verily, We have created man in toil.** (Al Balad: 4)

13 – Calamities remind you of the great blessings of good health and ease.

This calamity shows you in the clearest way the meaning of health and ease that you enjoyed for many years, but did not taste their sweetness or appreciate them fully.

Calamities remind you of blessings and the One Who bestows them, and cause you to thank and praise Allâh for His blessings.

14 – Longing for Paradise

You will never long for Paradise until you taste the bitterness of this world. How can you long for Paradise when you are content with this world?

This is some of the wisdom behind calamities, and the interests attained by them, and the wisdom of Allâh is great indeed.

Appendix 3

The Messenger (ﷺ) said: “I have been given the Qur’ân and something like it along with it”? [Sunan Abu Da’wud]

What is meant by the words “and something like it along with it” is that Allâh has given him another revelation, which is the Sunnah which explains the Qur’ân and clarifies its meanings, as Allâh says: **And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad) the Dhikr [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur’ân)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.** (an Nahl: 44)

So Allâh revealed the Qur’ân to him and also the Sunnah, which are the narrations and actions and approvals that are proven to be from him (ﷺ) related to fara'id, belief, worship and other religious and worldly matters. The Sunnah is a second revelation which Allâh revealed to him to complete the message, and he (ﷺ) expressed that in the ahadeeth which he explained to the 'Ummah, like his saying: “Deeds are but by intentions, and each man will have but that which he intended”; and “The prayer of one of you will not be accepted if he breaks wind until he does wudoo’”; and “No prayer is accepted without purification, and no charity is excepted from wealth acquired by treacherous means”; and “The five daily prayers, one Ramadan to another, and one Jumu'ah to another, are expiation for the sins that come in between them, so long as you do not commit major sins.” And there are many other saheeh ahadeeth that detail everything a Muslim needs to know and which have to do with explanation of the Book of Allâh. This revelation is a revelation that Allâh revealed to him, of which the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke and explained to the 'Ummah. The meanings are revelation from Allâh, and the words are from the Prophet (ﷺ).

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “The second revelation which was given to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him) also includes the sacred hadeeth (hadeeth qudsi) which the Messenger transmitted from his Lord, may He be glorified and exalted. They are revelation from Allâh and are His words, but they do not come under the same ruling as the Qur’ân, such as what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him) said, narrating it from his Lord: “O My slaves, I have forbidden injustice to Myself, and I have made it forbidden among you, so do not wrong one another. O My slaves, all of you are misguided except those whom I guide, so ask Me for guidance, I will guide you...” this is a lengthy hadeeth, which was narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (may Allâh be pleased with him). All of that is included in the words of Allâh: **By the star when it goes down (or vanishes). Your companion (Muhammad) has neither gone astray nor has erred. Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a Revelation revealed.** (An Najm: 1-4) – [Majmoo' Fatâwa 25/58-61]

Appendix 4

When actions are only meant for the Prophet (ﷺ)?

It should be noted that the basic principle concerning the actions of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him) is that they are legislation for the ‘Ummah, and it is not permissible to say that it is only for the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him) unless there is clear evidence to indicate that, because Allâh says: **Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow.** (Ahzâb: 21)

Based on this principle, the Companions (may Allâh be pleased with them) followed the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) in what he did, and they did not ask him whether this action was only for him or not. One of the reports which indicate that is the following:

It was narrated from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (make Allâh be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) prayed and took off his shoes, so the people took off their shoes. When he finished he said: “Why did you take off your shoes?” They said: “O Messenger of Allâh, we saw you take off your shoes, so we took off our shoes.” He said: Jibreel came to me and told me that there was some impurity on them. When one of you comes to the mosque, let him turn up his shoe and look at it, and if he sees something dirty on it let him wipe it on the ground, then let him pray wearing them.” [Musnad Ahmad, 17/242-243; classed Saheeh by the editors of al-Musnad]

Indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) got angry with some of his Companions when they thought that an action that he done was something that was exclusively for him. It was narrated from A’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), that a man said to the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ): “O Messenger of Allâh, sometimes I wake up junub and I want to fast.” The Messenger of valour (ﷺ) said: “Sometimes I wake up junub and I want to fast, so I do ghusl and fast.” The man said: “O Messenger of Allâh, you are not like us; Allâh has forgiven your previous and future sins.” The Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) got angry and said: “By Allâh, I hope to be the one who fears Allâh most of you and the most knowledgeable of what I follow.” [Sunan Abu Da’wud, 2389; classed as Saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood]

Ibn Hazm said: “It is not permissible to say concerning anything that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him) did that it was exclusively for him unless there is a text to that effect, because he got angry with one who said that, and everything with which the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) got angry is haraam.” [Al Ihkâm fi Usool al-Ahkâm, 4/433]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “The basic principle is that he comes under the same rulings as his ‘Ummah except in cases where there is evidence that a ruling applies exclusively to him. For that reason Umm Salamah (may Allâh be pleased with her) said: “Go out and do not speak to anyone until you shave your head and slaughter your sacrifice.” She knew that the people would follow him.” [Za’ad al-Ma’âd, 3/307]

Shaykh Sâlih ibn Fawzân was asked: What is it that shows or proves that something applies exclusively to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)?

He replied: “The basic principle is that whatever the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) brought is general and applies to him and to the ‘Ummah, except where there is evidence to indicate that it applies exclusively to him (blessings and peace of Allâh be upon him). There has to be evidence for exclusivity, because Allâh says: Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh you have a good example to follow. (Al Ahzâb: 21) – [Al-Muntaqa min Fatâwa al-Shaykh al-Fawzân, 5/369]

Among the rulings that applied exclusively to him (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) were: marriage without a mahr or wali; marriage to more than four simultaneously; and fasting continually for more than one day at a time.

Ibn Hazm further said: “It is not permissible for anyone after this to say concerning anything that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did that it was exclusively for him, except on the basis of a text, such as the text which speaks of the woman who offered herself to him in marriage **“a privilege for you only, not for the (rest of) the believers** (Al Ahzâb: 50); or his fasting continually and forbidding them to do that, saying “I am not like you”; or his sleeping and praying without renewing his wudoo’ - when he was asked about that, he said, “My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.”

So in cases where there is an explanation as we have mentioned, it is something that applies exclusively to him; but when there is no text, as we have said, then we may follow his example and we will be greatly rewarded for that, but if we choose not to do it, then we are not sinning but we will not be rewarded.” [Al-Ihkâm fi Usool al-Ahkâm, 4/433]

Appendix 5

Here are a selected few Saheeh (authentic) narrations that further prove the obligation to follow the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

- 1) Abu Rafi' (رضي الله عنهما) said that the Messenger of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "Let me not find any of you, and while resting on his couch, that if an order of mine is mentioned in front of him, whether a command of mine or a prohibition, he says: 'I do not know! Whatever we find in the Book of Allâh (the Qur'ân) we follow (otherwise we do not)!' [Ahmed, Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhee, Ibn Mâjah, At-Tahaawi and others]
- 2) Al-Miqdam (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger Of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "I have indeed been given the Qur'ân and something similar to it besides it. Yet, the time will come when a man leaning on his couch will say, 'Follow the Qur'ân only; what you find in it as halaal, take it as halaal, and what you find in it as haraam, take it as haraam.' But truly, what the Messenger of God has forbidden is like what God has forbidden." [Sunan Abu Da'wud and Darimi]
- 3) Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Messenger of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: "I have left you with two things, that (if you hold fast to them) you will never be misled after them: The Book of Allâh and my Sunnah. They will not separate from each other until they meet me at the Haudh (the pool of river water that flows outside of the gates of Al-Jannah)." [Mâlik and al-Hâkim]
- 4) The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also encouraged his Companions to convey to others what they have learned from him saying: **"May Allâh make radiant, the face of one who heard one of my sayings and then carried it to others. It may be that one carries understanding without being a person of understanding; it may be that one carries understanding to someone who possesses more understanding than he."**

This is a *mutawâtir* hadîth narrated from the following Companions:

- (1) Zayd ibn Thâbit by al-Tirmidhî (hasan in the printed eds), Abû Dâwûd, Ibn Mâjah, Ahmad, al-Dârimî, al-Shâfi'î in his *Risâla* (§1102), al-Tabarânî in *al-Kabîr* (§4891-4892, §4925, §4994), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *Jâmi' Bayân al-'Ilm* (1:175 §184), al-Râmahurmuzî in *al-Muhaddith al-Fâsil* (p. 64), Ibn Abî 'Asim in *al-Sunna* (p. 45 §94), al-Khatîb in *Sharaf Ashâb al-Hadîth* (p. 24) and *al-Faqîh wa al-Mutafaqqih* (2:71), al-Tahâwî in *Sharh Mushkil al-Athâr* (2:232=4:282 §1600), and Ibn Hibbân (1:270 §67, 2:454 §680), all with sound chains as stated by al-Arna'ût and others;
- (2) Jubayr ibn Mut'im by Ibn Mâjah, Ahmad, al-Dârimî, al-Tabarânî in *al-Kabîr* (§1541-1544), Abû Ya'la in his *Musnad* (1:347 §7413), al-Hâkim (1:87= 1990 ed 1:162), al-Qudâ'î in *Musnad al-Shihâb* (§1421), al-Tahâwî in *Sharh Mushkil al-Athâr* (2:232= 4:282 §1601), al-Khatîb in *Sharaf Ashâb al-Hadîth* (p. 18), and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *Jâmi' Bayân al-'Ilm* (1:184-187 §195-197), all with weak chains because of Muhammad ibn Ishâq who is a concealer in his narrative chains (*mudallis*), cf. al-Haythamî (1:139);
- (3) Anas by Ibn Mâjah, Ahmad, al-Tabarânî in *al-Awsat*, and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *Jâmi' Bayân al-'Ilm* (1:187-189 §198-199) with weak chains - as stated by al-Haythamî (1:138-139) - the collected force of which raise the hadîth to the grade of fair;
- (4) Abû Sa'îd al-Khudrî by al-Bazzâr with a chain of trustworthy narrators except for Sa'îd ibn Bâzigh who may be unknown as stated by al-Haythamî (1:137);
- (5) Abû al-Dardâ' by al-Dârimî and al-Tabarânî in *al-Kabîr* with a very weak chain because of 'Abd al-Rahmân ibn Zayd ("ibn Zubayd al-Yâmî" in al-Dârimî) as stated by al-Haythamî (1:137);

- (6) `Umayr ibn Qatâda al-Laythî by al-Tabarânî in *al-Kabîr* with a chain containing one narrator whose state is unsure as mentioned by al-Haythamî (1:138);
- (7) al-Nu`mân ibn Bashîr by al-Tabarânî in *al-Kabîr* with a very weak chain because of `Isâ al-Khabbât and by al-Hâkim (1:88=1990 ed 1:164) with a sound chain as confirmed by al-Dhahabî and as indicated by al-Haythamî (1:138);
- (8) Jâbir and • (9) Sa`d ibn Abî Waqqâs by al-Tabarânî in *al-Awsat* with weak chains as stated by al-Haythamî (1:138-139);
- (9) Ibn Mas`ûd by al-Tirmidhî with two chains (*hasan sahih*), Ibn Mâjah, Ahmad, Abû Ya`lâ in his *Musnad* (§5126, §5296), al-Shâfi`î in his (1:14), al-Baghawî in *Sharh al-Sunna* (1:233-234), al-Khatîb in *al-Kifâya* (p. 29, p. 173) and *Sharaf Ashâb al-Hadîth* (p. 18-19, p. 26), al-Bayhaqî in *Ma`rifat al-Sunan* (1:15-16, 1:43) and *Dalâ'il al-Nubuwwa* (6:540), Abû Nu`aym in *Târîkh Asbahân* (2:90) and *al-Hilya* (7:331) where he graded it *sahîh*, al-Hâkim in *Ma`rifat `Ulûm al-Hadîth* (p. 322), Ibn `Abd al-Barr in *Jâmi` Bayân al-`Ilm* (1:178-182 §188-191), Ibn Hibbân (1:268 §66, 1271-272 §68-69) with three fair chains according to al-Arna'ût, one of them with the wording "Allâh have mercy on someone who hears a hadîth from me then conveys it..."